



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



AUGUST 7 A DAY TO RECOGNIZE OUR HEROES

At the request of the SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed Thursday, Aug. 7, 2014, as "Purple Heart Recognition Day," calling on all South Dakotans to honor those men and women who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal.

"While we are grateful to all of those who have served our nation, the 7th of August is a day designated to remember and recognize the sacrifices endured by those members of the Armed Forces of the United States who have been awarded the Purple Heart Medal," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "It is fitting to set aside a day to recognize those who have been awarded the highest honor for their service."

The Governor encourages all South Dakotans to set aside time on Aug. 7



to honor our soldiers who have been honored with the Purple Heart. "The men and women serving in our Armed Forces are tough, determined, courageous and capable of unbelievable acts of courage and sacrifice," said Gov. Daugaard.

"Our military remains as strong as it has ever been. America's veterans have been defined by the virtues of selfless service, sacrifice and devotion to duty," said Zimmerman. "These men and women, who serve and have served, are the flesh and blood of American exceptionalism."

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Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dakota
veterans.



SOUTH DAKOTA GUARDSMEN AID ISAF DRAWDOWN

As the convoy exited the military base after dark, the mood in the gun-truck was jovial, like a group of old friends starting out on a road trip. After spending nearly an hour listening to pre-convoy briefs and being sent off with a group prayer, the soldiers were ready to go.

The vehicle was part of a six gun-truck security force consisting of soldiers from the 1742nd Transportation Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, whose two-day mission was to escort nearly a dozen Afghan contractor semi-trailers to Forward Operating Base Apache, Zabul Province, Afghanistan, and return again to Kandahar Airfield on July 24.

The mission of the Sioux Falls and Flandreau, South Dakota-based unit was in direct support of operations to close outlying bases in Regional Command-South's area of Afghanistan as the International Security Assistance Force draws down their forces.

"Basically, we go to these outlying bases and work with the units there and haul their equipment away that needs to be taken out of theater and back to Kandahar," said Capt. Tyler Gerlach, 1742nd company commander. "Our mission is to support retrograde operations in ISAF Regional Command-South."

The 1742nd has been supporting these base closings, also known as retrograde operations, since they arrived in Afghanistan last February, said Gerlach, of Stickney, South Dakota.

Initially their convoys consisted of all military vehicles, but over the last couple of months, the 1742nd's missions have included Afghan civilian trucks, which the unit has had to adjust to.

"They have different timelines and maintenance expectations than we do," said Gerlach about some of the challenges of working with the contracted drivers.

Spc. Derek Swain, an assistant gunner with the 1742nd, said initially they had to work through cultural work differences with the local contracted drivers, but over time they seem to be getting better vehicles and drivers.



"We've had missions in the past where we've had to tow the civilian contractor vehicles up all of the hills," said Swain, of Tea, South Dakota. "But the trucks seem pretty good this time, and the drivers seem to know what they're doing."

After driving about five hours, the procession of vehicles finally reached FOB Apache. The military vehicles escorted their civilian counterparts onto the base and guided them to the loading zone.

"We're here to retrograde Apache and close it down over the next couple of weeks," said Spc. Anthony Reed, the primary gunner for the convoy scout truck, and native of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. "We're resupplying them with the essentials and taking out what they don't need."

Reed said that they loaded the contractor's trucks with military combat vehicles, engineering equipment and other supplies destined for transport to Kandahar Airfield.

After loading the civilian semi-trailers, the soldiers parked their vehicles in the convoy staging area and set up an improvised camp.



ZIMMERMAN ADDRESSES 8TH INFANTRY DIVISION

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman welcomed members of the 8th Infantry Division at their reunion that was held in Custer July 20.

During his address Secretary Zimmerman spoke on Operation RAV and the veterans we are reaching via our outreach events and the phone campaign.

Secretary Zimmerman welcomes the opportunity to participate in these events and to say "thank you" to all veterans that have served.



SDDVA TEAM TOURS NEW VETERANS HOME SITE



Progress is ever-changing at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

Superintendent Richardson and his team are involved in weekly and sometimes daily meetings regarding the construction of the home. Residents are taken on periodic driving tours so they can see first-hand what their new home is looking like.

We encourage you to check out the webcam to view the progress that is being made.

<http://www.truelook.com/clients/scullconstruction-webcam3/>



MAJOR MEYERS RECOGNIZED FOR HER SERVICE

Recently, SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman had the distinct honor to present Major Trish Meyer with a proclamation from Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Gov. Daugaard proclaimed July 17th as Major Trisha Meyer Day in South Dakota.

Meyer was recognized for her loyalty and leadership as patriot fire control platoon leader, battalion human resources officer, detachment commander, deputy secretary of general staff, brigade adjutant and Joint Visitors Bureau operation officer.

Secretary Zimmerman notes, "it was a privilege to honor her successes, her sacrifices, and her service."



13TH ANNUAL VA SHOW AND SHINE

The Sioux Falls VA invites area veterans and residents to the 13th annual VA Show & Shine on Wednesday, August 20th. All vehicles and motorcycles are welcome, and there is no charge for registration or entrance.

Registration starts at 5:30 PM in the front parking lot of the VA medical center at 2501 W. 22nd Street. Trophies will be awarded for Veterans' Choice, People's Choice, and Director's Choice. Dash plaques will be distributed until gone. Veterans Canteen Service will have food for purchase.

This event is sponsored by the Siouxland Car Council, Veterans Canteen Service, and other businesses and individuals.

A special invitation is extended to veterans who currently are not receiving VA services. VA staff will be on hand to explain VA benefits and services available. Call Shirley Redmond at 333-6889 for more information.



SD GUARD, DANISH HOME GUARD PARTNERSHIP ADDS INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE TO OFFICER TRAINING

National Guard Soldiers enrolled in the Officer Candidate School at Fort Meade this summer were trained in areas such as leadership skills and small unit tactics, skill sets they will need as future leaders. One other skill set, not traditionally taught but more relevant now than ever, was thrown into the training – working with allied partner nations.

This was accomplished as members of the Danish Home Guard, Denmark's equivalent to the National Guard, were in South Dakota, July 13-26, instructing future U.S. Army National Guard officers. Their role as OCS instructors was possible through the DoD Reserve Officers Foreign Exchange Program and from a growing relationship with the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Members of the 196th Regiment (RTI) traveled to Nymindégab Camp in Denmark, July 1-4, where they conducted U.S. Army Basic Instructor Course training with 15 members of the Danish Home Guard. The course, which trains Army instructors to deliver battle-focused training, set the stage for Danish officers to instruct officer candidates this summer at Fort Meade.

Following the training, three Danish Home Guard instructors were selected to represent Denmark for the first time at a U.S. OCS instructor podium, where they would teach officer candidates classes ranging from land navigation to troop leading procedures.

The 196th would like to send a few instructors to training in Denmark, conduct the U.S.-based instructor training in Denmark every other year, and ultimately see the South Dakota National Guard partner with the Danish Home Guard to conduct military training in another country.

Exchanges like these are the result of the DoD Reserve Officers Foreign Exchange Program, which provides National Guard and Reserve officers training associated with mobilization duties while enhancing their ability to work and communicate with the military individuals of the host nation.

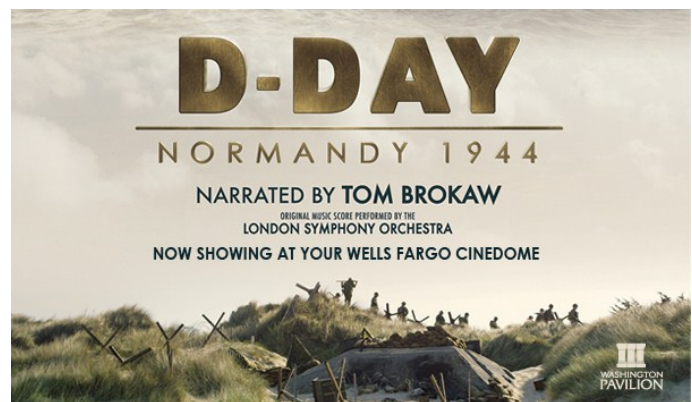
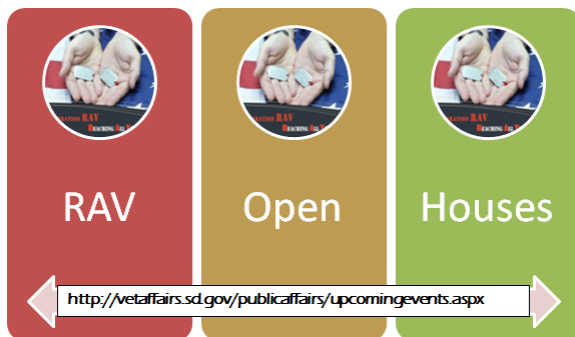
The instructors concluded their trip to South Dakota with the course completion ceremony held at Mount Rushmore National Memorial.



Upcoming Events

2014

Aug. 6—DOL Veterans/Guardsmen/Reservists/Spouses Job Fair—Augustana College Elmen Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm
Aug. 20—Annual SFVAHCS Show and Shine
Aug. 22—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux City, IA
Aug. 25-29—NACVSO Training Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
Aug. 30—727th DAV 10th Annual Charity Poker Run—Brookings—10:00 am
Sept. 5—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Watertown
Sept. 11—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Wagner
Sept. 19—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux Falls
Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am



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